

Campylobacteriosis

What is campylobacteriosis?

Campylobacteriosis is an infectious disease caused by bacteria of the genus *Campylobacter*.

How common is campylobacteriosis?

Campylobacter is one of the most common causes of diarrheal illness in the United States.

How do people get campylobacteriosis?

Campylobacteriosis usually occurs as isolated, sporadic events, not as part of recognized outbreaks. Most cases are associated with eating raw or undercooked poultry meat or from cross-contamination of other foods by these items. Infants may get the infection by contact with poultry packages in shopping carts. Outbreaks are usually associated with unpasteurized milk or contaminated water. The organism is not usually spread from person to person, but this can happen through exposure to the infected person's diarrhea.

What are the symptoms of campylobacteriosis?

Most people who become ill with campylobacteriosis get diarrhea, cramping, abdominal pain, and fever within two to five days after exposure to the organism. The diarrhea may be bloody and can be accompanied by nausea and vomiting. In persons with compromised immune systems, *Campylobacter* occasionally spreads to the bloodstream and causes a serious life-threatening infection.

How is campylobacteriosis diagnosed?

Many different kinds of infections can cause symptoms similar to campylobacteriosis such as diarrhea and bloody diarrhea. *Campylobacter* infection is diagnosed when a culture of a stool specimen yields the organism.

What is the treatment for campylobacteriosis?

Almost all persons infected with *Campylobacter* recover without any specific treatment. Patients should drink extra fluids as long as the diarrhea lasts. In more severe cases, antibiotics can be used, and can shorten the duration of symptoms if given early in the illness. Your doctor will decide whether antibiotics are necessary.

How can campylobacteriosis be prevented?

Some simple food handling practices can help prevent *Campylobacter* infections.

- Cook all poultry products thoroughly. Make sure that the meat is cooked throughout (no longer pink) and any juices run clear. All poultry should be cooked to reach a minimum internal temperature of 165°F.
- If you are served undercooked poultry in a restaurant, send it back for further cooking.
- Wash hands with soap before preparing food.

- Wash hands with soap after handling raw foods of animal origin and before touching anything else.
- Prevent cross-contamination in the kitchen by using separate cutting boards for foods of animal origin and other foods and by carefully cleaning all cutting boards, countertops, and utensils with soap and hot water after preparing raw food of animal origin.
- Avoid consuming unpasteurized milk and untreated surface water.
- Make sure that persons with diarrhea, especially children, wash their hands carefully and frequently with soap to reduce the risk of spreading the infection.
- Wash hands with soap after contact with pet feces.

How serious is campylobacteriosis?

In rare cases, *Campylobacter* infection can cause arthritis or Guillain-Barré syndrome, a disease affecting the nerves of the body. Guillain-Barré syndrome usually occurs several weeks after diarrheal illness. In persons with compromised immune systems, *Campylobacter* occasionally spreads to the bloodstream and causes a serious life-threatening infection.

How do I get more information on campylobacteriosis?

Calhoun County Public Health Department

Phone: (269) 969-6383

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Phone: 800-CDC-INFO

Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/campylobacter/>

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This fact sheet is meant to provide general health information and is not intended to be medical advice or otherwise take the place of your doctor's orders or to diagnose your specific health problems. Check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your health.

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